

# FANTASY

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1935-37

PITTSBURGH

KRAUS REPRINT

Nendeln, Liechtenstein

1969

FANTASY

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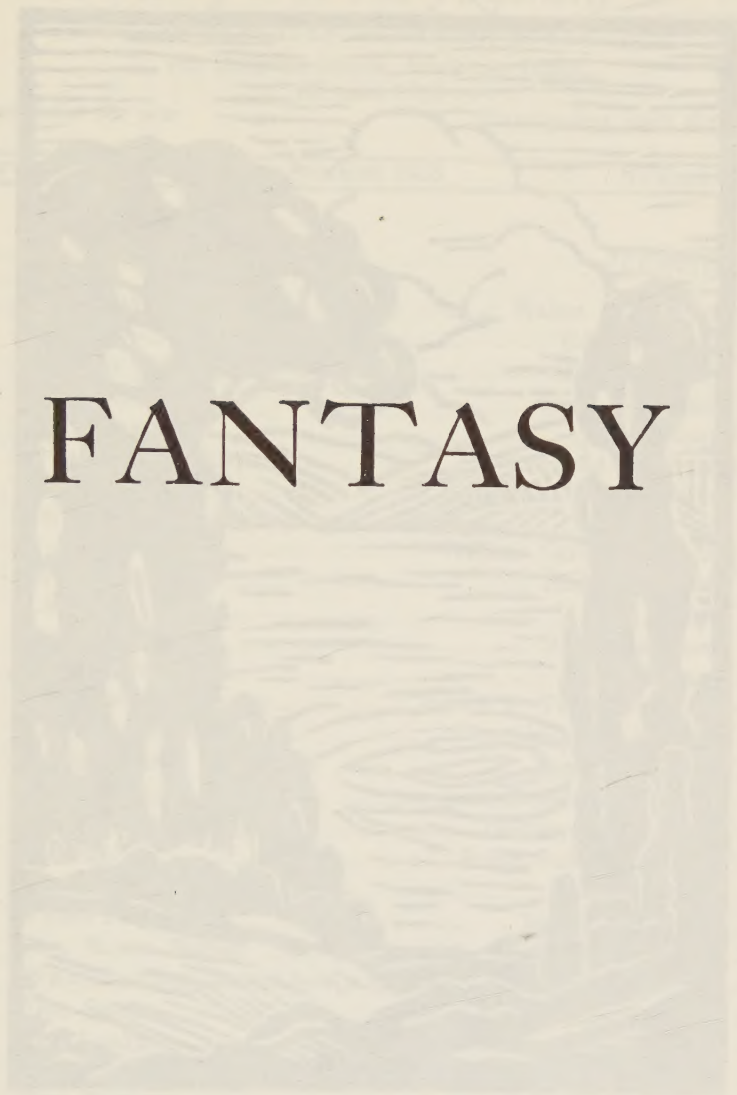
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Fantasy — of Fairy Tales

# FANTASY



There is a story of a man  
and his wife who lived in a  
small house in a village.  
The man was a carpenter  
and the woman was a weaver.  
They had a son who was  
very beautiful and kind.  
One day the boy went  
out to the forest to cut  
wood. He found a small  
house in the woods and  
went in. He found a woman  
sitting there. She was  
very old and ugly. She  
told him that she was the  
witch of the forest. She  
said that she had a magic  
wand and that she could  
make him a king. She  
said that she would make  
him a king if he would  
marry her. The boy was  
very happy and he agreed  
to marry her. The witch  
took him to her house and  
she made him a king. He  
was very happy and he  
lived with her for many  
years. One day he went  
out to the forest to cut  
wood. He found the same  
house and he went in. He  
found the same woman  
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very old and ugly. She  
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years.



From too much love of living,  
From hope and fear set free,  
We thank with brief thanksgiving  
Whatever gods may be  
That no life lives for ever;  
That dead men rise up never;  
That even the weariest river  
Winds somewhere safe to sea.  
—Swinburne



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# ANNOUNCEMENTS



We are very grateful to Robert P. Tristram Coffin for his kindness in serving as judge of the poems in our current contest on a rural theme. Mr. Coffin was selected as the most popular American poet during Poetry Week, and is an instructor at Bowdoin College. He is the author of numerous volumes of poetry and prose, the most recent being *Strange Holiness*; while a novel, *Red Sun in the Morning*, dealing with the New England coast, is due this summer. Mr. Coffin's deep interest in the rural scene has made him an unusually happy choice as judge of the recent competition.

"I think these poems are surprisingly good. I have had a job selecting the best," writes the judge. However, honours finally narrowed down to Mrs. Edith Heilman, of Camp Hill, Penna., already familiar to these pages. "Harvest" faces this page. Honourable mentions go to Travis Tuck Jordan, of Raleigh, N. C., and Ruth Hill Mitchell, of New York, N. Y. Both these poems will appear later.

The Alpress Publishers, 1321 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, Penna. has made the interesting offer to print as one of their broadsides the poem in this issue of *FANTASY*, which, in the opinion of four judges (names to be announced in the next issue), is considered best. This press, combining good poetry and fine printing, issues broadsides in new and unusual format, a variety of type-faces, both modern and classic, and imported, hand-made rag papers used exclusively. The editions are limited to 150 copies, a certain number of which go to the poet printed. It is a handsome and generous offer, and we await with interest the judges' decision.

Our next issue, in recognition of the leading voice in American poetry, is to be dedicated to Walt Whitman. Received as it was with jeers from many sides, *Leaves of Grass* continues to exert great influence over poetic thought and technique. But, whatever the attacks of Edmund Gosse, John Jay Chapman, and others, Whitman remains the most truly national of American poets and, more than this, an imposing figure in world poetry.

Besides an essay on Whitman by a noted educator and other material on the poet, the prize contest is to be a poem along the same line, some phase of the man's personality or philosophy. The entries should be approximately thirty lines and must be received here before September 10th. May we ask that all entries in the Whitman contest and all future competitions be addressed directly to *FANTASY CONTEST EDITOR*, same address? Adherence to this request will greatly facilitate editorial time.

We'll greatly appreciate, too, hearing from anyone with unknown or little known Whitman material. And please try for the Whitman prize poem contest.

# Harvest

Edith Heilman

Ay, raid my orchards, now the fruit is ripe,  
And over the low wall the wild grape  
Hangs its purple cloak! The golden-rod  
Stands desiccated in the fields where corn  
Might well have grown, had there been any need  
For planting!

A man has sons to follow him along  
A dark furrow in the earth; to sow in spring,  
And reap at harvest; a man has sturdy sons  
To prune his trees, to mend his broken fences,  
Keep his cattle fed, sell and barter  
In the public market. A man's sons learn  
To know and love, as he before them learned  
To know and love, the soil.

But mine are gone—  
Swallowed by steel and stone, the cities' gorge,  
Drowned in a sea of anonymity.  
All but one, whose slender, woman's hands  
Could never guide a plow, or swing a sledge.  
Why should he, of all my sons, return,  
Who, watching the horizon, dares to see  
A symbol in this pinched and shrunken earth!

Let the wall crumble, and the weeds grow tall!



## CALVARY GRACE

MARSHALL KIRBY

Hollow out the ground to hold His cross!  
And when dusk comes, that Man from Galilee  
Will bother us no more with His contentions!

With venom strike and sound the tools—but soon  
The sun which casts the shadow of one cross  
Remakes a city and a myriad souls;  
For Calvary rises on Jerusalem  
And rears a crucifix to blind a world—  
The pick's persistency, the iron's power  
Witlessly with the hollowings of ground  
Carving the candelabrum of an hour  
From which an incandescence for the years.

Unwatched the jealousies, the greeds which masque as  
Love and benevolence to us and master  
Men . . .

Quiet and stark the hill stands, moving  
Only with earth through space, a convex star-print  
Trailing its tenuous light across the skies,  
Lastly a wan electric glow at heavens'  
End where air curves backward into time.

Choked with the sun's heat, now the crumbling clods  
Pass into dust beneath the restive feet;  
Somewhere reflected flies the image, hurled to  
Regions beyond the grasp of that which goes:  
For so the earthless comedies of earth  
Entering the swift still ether of the dark.

## GYPSY GIRL

ELIAS LIEBERMAN

He would not let her song prevail:  
Mad rhythms racked his brain;  
Her gypsy eyes released a hail  
Of sweetly subtle pain.

How could he tell, who turned away,  
Who drove her from his door,  
That gypsy tunes would haunt him day  
And night forevermore.



## NO DREAMS

JOHN PUDNEY

My thirst was in a morning: one awake  
The spring made thirsty, rumouring the sands  
Of shores where the bright waves roar  
And salt spumes shake  
Glittering about the diver's hands.

A bud's grave nuptial and the sun-carved plinth  
Remembered, carried carelessly away,  
Makes my heart heavy with the hyacinth  
In a spring day.

Our voices are uneasy, for the dead  
Whisper at corners, and the lover's eye  
Leaves a last thought seen and unsaid,  
Dreading illimitable sky.

Upon the mouth of loving are the lips  
Not quenched. A greeting glacial water stings  
And lashes there, to limits, to the tips  
And tops of infinite springs.

## ONE DAY AT DUSK

J. REDWOOD ANDERSON

### I.

The dull, jammed crowds along the pavement, packed  
to embolismal clots, that stare  
on provocation spread and stacked  
in a gold gape of window-square:  
stacked with a trash of merchandise  
unmeet for human play or use,  
gay and skilful to seduce  
a lying appetite with lies;  
and cold above them and aloof,  
edging the dark long line of roof,  
the green dusk deepening in the winter skies.

Chatter of voices, scattered words that hit  
Thought's eyeball like a windy grit;  
torn paper lying  
trodden and sodden—the cast rags  
of the dead News; torn paper flying  
in the cold gust—the tattered flags  
of conquered armies, or the rout  
of desperate spirits spun about  
forever on the whirlwinds of the pit.

## One Day at Dusk—continued

Slow, gravid trams that round the street's sharp curve  
swerve  
with shrieking protest to the gods they serve;  
choking exhausts that cough and spit;  
horn-blares, the hiss of tyres, the blundering roar  
of rullies: then—the Bedlam split—  
Long live the King! . . . the final football-score.

### II.

I, with head bent,  
ravaged with savage discontent,  
jostled and jarred from curb to street . . .  
O for one sweet  
and lovely thing to heal my pride  
weak from its salt Gethsemane!  
my wounded pride of humankind,  
mocked and spat on, scourged, denied—  
Would I were deaf! would I were blind!  
Alas, my speech bewrayeth me . . .  
am I not, too, of Galilee?  
O Cock of Peter, crow not twice!

I saw no light in any face  
save light reflected from the electric glares;  
I marked in every one the trace  
of unconfessed despairs;  
their brows were a waste place  
strewn with the ash of thought's dead fire;  
their eyes  
labyrinths of lost desire.

For through the mask of grin or frown  
—comic Up, or tragic Down—  
behind the dictaphonic speech  
the callow learn, the callous teach,  
I saw and heard of every one the soul:  
a starveling thing that crept about  
begging in daily fear and doubt  
his birthright as a dole:  
right to clear loves and dearest freedoms, right  
to moral passion, intellectual light,  
right to the riches of the earth and sky . . .  
Alas, poor beggar, go commend  
thyself to God, who hast no other friend,  
and lay thee down and die.

III.

Savage and sick,  
now elbowed left, now shouldered right,  
I took,  
swift as I might  
through the thick narrows of that shifting throng,  
my morose way along;  
when, suddenly, my brooding sight  
grew ware of him: he stood  
at the kerb's edge and leaned upon his stick,  
that, as he leaned upon it, shook  
with the slacked load of his old misery;  
yet 'twas not this that held me—not that he  
through every loop-hole of his dress  
shot me with arrows of distress,  
not the torn boot, nor the worn hand,  
the sorrows of his dim decrepitude—  
but that, in all that press  
hither and thither of the crowd around,  
he seemed to stand  
remote from man, indifferent, alone:  
to stand as one  
who in some desert place has found  
the secret of a noble solitude.

IV.

I saw his face—framed in the thin  
stained stubble of his cheek and chin,  
flanked by the draggled lank grey hair;  
his face where many a rheumy tear  
trickled down to smear  
its pallid passage through the city's grime.  
I saw his face—rapt and sublime  
beyond the cognizance of time;  
his eyes—and, in his eyes, a look  
that wavered not, though all his body shook,  
but, in the strange rigidity  
of saints that kneel in ecstasy,  
stayed fixed. Fixed upon what? I turned to see . . .  
and there,  
hung between  
the steep sides of a street's ravine,  
clear and clean and swinging low,  
the new moon's bow!

O moon, thou Purity of the young night,  
soft Second Glory of created light,  
forgive the sound and fury of our days,  
and of man's ways  
the murky chaos that men make,  
for that look's sake!

## THREE POEMS

CLARK MILLS

### Poem for Tomorrow

Now is the time for labor  
under the sun.  
Stranger and friendly neighbor  
should rise as one,

breathe March air, swiftly harness  
wagon to team,  
go forth, waken a furnace,  
use live steam.

Each will speak to the other  
because he must.  
All shall put arms together  
and from this dust

lift smokestacks, mine lead ore,  
web tracks through day,  
bridge a wide stream, and more,  
but not your way—

you cannot drive them longer,  
sowing and reaping  
the blackened bread of their hunger  
and cold sleeping.

### Portrait

Depressive-manic, fur helmeted, comes  
at three A. M. to shovel coal  
poured hours back from a van. Drums,  
crunches loose gravel on the street  
bending towards it his whole  
strength, with an even, patient beat.  
Now he's filled up the bin  
and turned and looked and gone.  
His door opens. He walks in  
bearing that mad peace, alone;  
then we let off our glee  
with shouts, explosively  
holding our faces, falling to earth,  
but know under our humor,  
feel below that rush of mirth  
damp fear upon us who are sane,  
chuckle all the summer  
night, cannot say it  
has gripped the unpitying brain  
with compulsion, disquiet.



## To an Elder Contemporary

That sad un hoped-for day shall come  
when you'll stand by and see  
new people take the earth like rain, sigh  
at light as deep as a bass drum  
on your lids, feel stiff and tired.

The pink and amber sunsets you stared  
on; the aureate flush of strings;  
girls with skins and voices like water;  
these collapse. These foot-worn rungs  
will fold up, ladder you down through bitter

air, the freezing hostility  
of men who do not remember your day.  
Hurry. Draw close that collar. Shamble  
past windy cornice. Get old.  
Dread the immense, avoid the simple.

Your mirror-loving introspection  
will seek the clinic for a peaceful death.  
Under the antiseptic friction  
of junk-heap shovels, under the blossoming blood  
you'll fade out, sink back, lost wraith.

When they are listing ferocity and honor  
your name will not be called.  
They'll be kind, though, and lenient  
with one who found a warm corner  
always to barricade what's convenient.

You burned incense. Connoisseured  
love. You didn't walk but slid.  
While the rest give up worm-gnawed ghosts and die  
you'll fill a museum, swaddled and barred  
with nothing to do, nothing at all to do.

# TO WRITE AMERICAN POETRY

By William Carlos Williams

*Though Dr. Williams will be the last to admit it, the following article is written in strenuous opposition to the critique offered by Mr. Doughty in our Spring issue. Born in 1883, William Carlos Williams has taken time from his duties as a practising physician in order to write, and in so doing has become one of the founders of the Imagist movement, and one of the most original voices in our poetry. His work has appeared in innumerable publications, and he is the author of a number of books of poetry. He lives in Rutherford, N. J.*

"Before a theory can be considered true, it is virtually indispensable that there be perfect freedom to impugn it. Any limitation, even indirect and however remote, imposed on any one choosing to contradict it, is enough to cast suspicion upon it. Hence, freedom to express one's thought, even counter to the opinion of the majority or of all, even when it offends the sentiments of the few or of the many, even when it is generally reputed absurd or criminal, always proves favorable to the discovery of objective truth."

Any man is worthy of respect, on the other hand, who takes poetry seriously enough to defend it when he feels that it has been subjected to public indignities. Unfortunately for most of us, we read, but we seldom read enough. Americans particularly are offenders on this score. And having no well defined traditions in the art of writing or its appreciation, there is nothing bred into us to support us when our reading casts us upon the rocks. We commit blunders in drawing

conclusions which if we had a liberal basis of thought back of us, by reading properly supported, we should not fall into. We cannot relate the parts which we see in isolation into a valid—or at least valuable—entity.

Therefore, as in the case of Mr. Doughty, we are likely to become infuriated by that which we are not fitted to understand. To write with any acuteness of understanding of what the problems of the art represent is to assure yourself absolutely against any possibility of popular understanding.

However, what I write is not in any sense a reply. Whatever the justification for such attacks, and I don't say there isn't some for them, since the path of the actively thoughtful is full of mistakes, the aggregate of their wit is regression and stoginess. The only possible reply to them is excellent work, excellent creative materialization in the materials of the art itself, and that is all.

The spoken language of any geographic group has characteristics

special to itself. For example the English language and the American language spoken in the United States differ greatly from each other both in word use and inflection. Technically one of the requisites of the prosody in each of these groupings is to recognize the minute tendencies of the language and to build accordingly. The pace of American is entirely different from the pace of English. Also the ideology of Americans is vastly different from that of the English based as they are on two diametrically opposed historical concepts. Furthermore, English is a fairly static language in the present day while American is a ferment of new development. Every day in American new phrases are coined, new words are invented and new twists of meaning are given to old words and figures. Thus it would be reasonable to suppose that the poetic forms of America and England would differ and continue to differ still further as time progresses. And American, as it differs, should be the language (or the English dialect) in which the closest attunement to the accuracies of present day and future ideology, social or otherwise, will be found. Therefore Americans whose senses are alert must recognize today and use the shifts in sense as between the language of England and their own country. And nowhere is this more pointedly apparent than in the concentrations which poetry offers.

The smallest unit in prosody is the foot. Here (I think) the technical work must be done. Pace gives the key. I'm not going into that. But when the metrical characteristics of a language are spoken of, it means that there is a natural sense of measure in any language, not precise, not easily set down for study, but there nevertheless. This

metrical but evasive foundation of a language is its deepest truth, as it is also the foundation of its prosody. It is there that poetry meets the race. It is essentially different in English and American. The poet's business is to find that basis, to discover it in the speech around him and to build it into his compositions. It has been done in our two or three great poets, while the failure to do so has branded some of our other poets as worthless. It is not a task for men like T. S. Eliot, for instance, who is, if such a thing be possible, a detriment to the best that America can do. This hidden, inner quality in a language is what I have spoken of as its "metric". The term may be a bad one but the thing it points to is basic. When this is felt deeply it will be impossible to write in the older modes; one will be driven to "create". One may be driven on the rocks. It is more than likely that this will occur. But one may also find oneself on the classic path. And it is the only way to get there. Objective truth to his materials is the first quality of the man of genius.

Can it not be seen that the formalizations of English as it has been written in the past were product of the ideology of the days in which the works were produced? True, genius of the past is better than stupidity of today. But there are today life forces driving the writer to other ends than those of yesterday; and if the truth (not the progress) of today is to be respected and *used*, the writer, the poet, must discover in his own day more expansive forms of expression, wider structures than those of yesterday. The old forms carry over the restrictive ideas of feudalism. Not that they were not perfect in their day. But they were also inventions in their day. They were great, they

## To Write American Poetry — continued

were and are still transcendent in their perfections; but for that very reason they are to be dreaded, *except* by those who have the insight to discover in them the same propulsive inner necessities for their structure as faces the creative artist today.

To study the classics as finished works is fatal to the intelligence. In them is caught all that holds man from facing his fate. No one but envies the man asleep on the levee in the sun. But it isn't a choice that work holds more excitement. In the old *forms* is ensnared all the lethargy, all the backwardness, all the childishness of the past. It is

pleasant to dwell upon such things. But in the spoken language, unformulated but teeming with possibilities, lies the work of today. If a man can discover the truer connotations between form and meaning, and invent newer forms to embody that greater meaning—then his poetry will get a different *shape* from that of other times. Such a poetry is possible only perhaps in America. It may be a wild statement but it has to stand. It may not occur, but if it does not, and if we prove unworthy of what Whitman started for us, it will be due entirely to the dullness of our worship of the past.

### IN A CHINA SHOP

KATHLEEN SUTTON

I stroll among the pink tea cups,  
Stirring them with the mind  
Into brittle chatter:  
    This tea is very rare—a jasmine tea—  
    Only the few  
    Comprehend its flavor  
    Delicately  
    It is only a gesture—  
    The meaning of a soul nourished  
    With tea—a very rare  
    A jasmine  
    Tea . . .  
It is time, I say to the shopkeeper  
Courteously,  
To go out into the world. In a Fifth Avenue bus  
Or a Bronx subway  
(Who among you has picked even a row of cotton?  
Who blackened by the sooty fires of Birmingham  
Has caught the beauty of fountains gushing hot steel?)  
The clash of living  
Would shatter the delicate pink tea cups  
Into bright bits  
Of aesthetic nothingness . . .  
Let us leave them safely on the glass shelves  
Dreaming of jasmine tea.



O perishing light, though thou confound  
This blood . . and chill it at the source,  
The song, rising away from the ground  
Shall not be swerved from its course.

Waylay the chant in the singing throat  
And scatter its lay—the charmed  
Strain, reassembling, note by note,  
Shall float on the air, unharmed.

As when a cloud in the path of the sun  
Moves on its way, the Sundered light  
Visibly flows into one,  
The parts shall tremble and reunite

To spire anew, as leaves upstart,  
In spring to come—when light shall spur  
In the old way the early heart  
And the faithful blood, the carrier

To voice—again some fervid throat,  
Surer, knowing its clear direction,  
Shall pour the melody, note by note,  
Whole and without imperfection.

## OUTRAGED HAND

ROBIN LAMPSON

"Not touched by human hands!" they smugly say,  
Proffering aseptic bread in cellophane,—  
Assuming we will credulously pay

Our dimes in gratitude! And they maintain,  
"By great machines, at any cost improved,  
We cut and thresh and grind the virgin grain;

The chaff and all but whitest flour's removed;  
And no sweat falls where engines knead the dough,  
And bake & wrap this loaf: Pure! Tested! Proved!"

And yet, somehow, no sanitary glow  
Lights up our grimy faces . . . Outraged hand,  
Withhold your potent dime! You anciently know

The intimate feel of dough and scythe and land:  
Beat down this sterile cult, or be unmanned!

## TWO PORTRAITS

JESSE STUART

### Jim Hailey

This seeded grass does not have rights to say  
The things it tattles to soft-soaping wind;  
Jim Hailey's coffee-grounded in his clay—  
Why not be better leave his past behind?  
Jim Hailey loved his whiskey and his gun,  
He loved his women and his hills of timber—  
I've seen him shirtless work beneath the sun  
And sing 'Chip Get Your Hair Cut' I remember.  
Jim Hailey leaves his timbered hills, his plow,  
His whiskey, women, and his sprouty land.  
We do not know if Jim is plowing now  
His bull-tongue furrows in a stranger land.  
But we do know the phlox blooms on his hills  
And sweet wild alum blooms, blue as the sky  
And from his moonlit oaks sing whippoorwills  
And rabbits play on cornfields he's laid by.

### Fern Hailston

Fern was blond goddess men did fear to trust.  
She had not saint but devil in her eyes—  
I loved Fern's powerhouse of living dust  
Men feared to trust and women did despise—  
Many the nights I roamed the hills with her  
In fens no place for silks nor velvet-leather—  
And in her devilish eyes I've seen a tear  
When we would pause in moon-misted sprout-leather.  
I never knew Fern Hailston as men thought  
And women thought—but I did know her better  
Than those whose minds possessed one only thought,  
Gossipers who robed in silks and velvet-leather—  
I never kissed Fern's lips nor did possess  
The Fern Hailston so many did distrust—  
But in sweet Fern I found a tenderness  
That made me love her devilish eyes and trust.

# THE LOST GRAVEYARD

ROBERT P. TRISTRAM COFFIN

Here where two centuries of dead  
Lay with the sun's path, head by head,  
The sun no longer comes at all,  
The hemlocks have come through the wall.

The houses which supplied this lot  
Are less than the graveyard. They are not.  
Great trees stand where they drank sun,  
Not lilacs even are left, not one.

Here roots that waited outside have come,  
Some have tipped the stones, and some  
Have dug down deep to the things they feared  
Years, years ago, when this plot was cleared.

The forest has won. And yet the trees,  
For all they won, are not at ease;  
The wild roots know, somehow, a bone  
Is not the same thing as a stone.

Surprised to find that things so hated  
Could lie so still and cold and sated,  
The green things stand in awe and wonder  
At what their roots have buried under.

Birds know this place of darkling quiet,  
And they had rather not come nigh it,  
Rabbits and the velvet moles  
Seek softer soil to make their holes.

It seems as if this were a snare  
A spider wove across the air  
Which has caught a bee so bright  
The spider hides away in fright.



*I*T has been unanimously agreed that the selection of Miss Johnson's Now in November as the recipient of the Pulitzer Prize for the novel is a happy one. Though other books rated high during the year, *So Red the Rose*, *The Folks*, *February Hill* and *Mary Peters*, there was no dissenting voice when the award went to Miss Johnson.

Born in 1910 at Kirkwood, Missouri, she attended Washington University Art school and completed a college course. "I have lived on a farm in St. Louis County since 1922," writes Miss Johnson. "I am irritated by the creeping in of roads, houses and estates. My uncle is a dairy farmer in Boone County. The land around his is farmed by tenants or share-croppers. Their condition is almost hopeless under the present system. Farming appears to be tolerated as an evil necessity. The country is beautiful but its people are wretched. I hate standardization, ugliness, narrowness of life—its unrest and quicksand quality. It makes me feel as though I were on the margin of a whirlpool. I love poetry and cooking and all the little things. Salamanders and fungus seem more exciting to me than war or politics, but it is cowardly and impossible to ignore them or try to escape. I love sincerity and simplicity and am always being disillusioned by people. I wish that everyone could see the significance and beauty of ordinary things, and wish that the destruction of nature could be stopped before it's too late. I like everything from Aiken's poetry to Arrowsmith, including *Virgil*, *Hans Werfel*, *Les Misérables*, *Beverly Nichols*, *Beebe*, *Dostoevsky* and *Rebecca West*. I would like to write and illustrate children's books—not for children, but a sort of nightmare collection such as has never been published before. The only complete peace and happiness seems to be in the fields or woods when one is alone, and even that isn't sufficient for always."



# EPITAPH

By Josephine W. Johnson

SHE is gone now, leaving no word or message, only Saul's poisoned eyes and an unwarped memory of her in his mind,—hourly expecting her return, for whom no return is possible. Neither if he is healed or dies.

I came back, not loving her, not even desiring her, and remember with indifference her cold, frantic love which she tried to conceal. Narrow and prudish and half at war with itself. Concerned with the nice, and purblind to its strength. And now in the long, over-quiet and monotonous returning of night, the red wash of light over the fields and naked gulches, the forced and humble acknowledgment of law behind this red flooding which stains ground and walls and the stagnant water, I come to accept, and to realize how entirely she is gone.

She is gone because of her fear, although I have not told, nor will Saul tell, believing that God has written in sores across his eyes and praying forgiveness for his sins. "I forget, Cairn; I forget," he says. "If I have sinned, I cannot remember. Neither the time nor what led me . . . But if I say I am without sin, I deceive myself . . . and neither she nor any one living can heal me."

She is more utterly gone than if she had died physically, death being a stopping of breath, a thing complete and comprehensible to the living eye. A clean thing in its finality. And she is more lost even than through madness, that being also a clear thing compared to the sanity of her desire, and the enormous growth of self, wide and webbed as root and branches. You say a man is lost through death, or lost through madness,—here perhaps in the fro-

zen body or in throttled bones of the insane, but gone and not with us any longer. But she is more wholly lost to life and to herself than if she were dead or mad. There in the mind's hard sponge, the granite malls of self,—*I . . . Mine . . .* built up hourly. If she had been weaker they would have collapsed, dissolved with pity and the washing back and forth of doubt, because she had all that goes either to steel a mind with renunciation or break it in rock dust. The scrail of poverty and sickness and sour worry. Crying in her mind or aloud to me and to something beyond us. "Now for God's sake be done with me!—I am sick of little things. Burn me, or let me go free of this acid dribble!"

But by this she was neither steel-ed nor hardened, but instead became law and stone herself. Between her and life this impregnable stone of self, trusting only the opening of desire. In this way the wall built up, and then by itself destroyed—first hardened and then dissolved into entire freedom. "I owe nothing. Nothing comes after, or has come before. Because my life is my own . . . because only death comes after." And I told her that I knew in my mind—in the hidden and unchanged part where truth is—that nothing is enough, that we go hungry till we die who are without faith—that neither beauty nor success nor the early asters nor the stark wind of autumn nor love nor any known thing can satisfy for always, and that only a belief in some God or eternal life brings full peace.

THEN she said that they who believe die also even as we who doubt, and the difference is only

## Epitaph — continued

that they go trusting and full-swollen with their faith, like sheep to slaughter, and die in the shambles of God; while we who doubt know darkness and the acid taste of death, alone and empty with the fleshless body of fear, and die as wild things do in the moment of hunger. And the end is the same for both . . .

. . . Now there is hate changing into pity. —Hate not because of the stone she laid down and only I could take up again, nor because she stands between me and the calm seeing of life with faith and normality, reminding me always of its dark and insane undertow; but because of her cruelty and betrayal of Saul's trust. —And this done in the belief that I loved her and would come to her sooner;—out of duty, perhaps (knowing my stolid compassion), if her husband were blind and unable to work any longer—and come willingly, with more freedom, because there would be none now to see. —Her shame touching out and staining her conception of all other minds. It was like her to have feared the complete definiteness of death, to have shrunk from its irrevocability and in its place done this. Under the shell of miracle.

And then either horror at what she had done, or the fear that someone else should come, seeing with cold and reasonable eyes, not excusing her or with any pity—this sent her to hide and, if not now, then sooner or later, into the hands of death; which she feared and yet made at the same time her worn excuse for living in these last years hand-and-will to no one but herself, and at the mercy of that self, not understood but only obeyed.

This is clear in the cold patient mind of myself who did not love her but found it not possible either to hate or forget her, and go over in thought the lean formless flesh

and the straight hard cheeks, and her words in the mind like the unwelcome and monotonous repetition of banal lines or stale music, repeated unwillingly until they seem a part of the skull itself, inescapable as bone.

"You live only in the mind. Passionless. Indifferent. You do not know what it is to love and desire and want until desire becomes hate through no fulfillment." This she was saying to me every hour that I saw her, but not in any words, her mouth being closed and fastened with some inbred austerity and reticence, lying parallel with a greater selfishness. This reluctance being born both of shame and pride, and grafted into the cells from the first understanding, and now no longer to be distinguished from those things made with her,—the narrow face and hungry eyes and unchanging mouth.

I could have answered the unspoken words, saying aloud the answer to shrivel and violate her with the truth; and know now that the acidness of truth would have been better than the spore swarm of beliefs and imaginings built only on the desire for their existence. I could have said, with the fierce brevity of truth, that she was less to me than a dry twig or dust; and that I had known all the crucifixion and raw ecstasy of love, and that if I was to her numb, gelded, bloodless as a brother, it was because of her own emptiness, rootless as dodder, and sallow with a false stain. And for all the feverish scour of her desire, a man might as well hold a dead thing in his hands and feel the hard bones under the blood's brief, nervous flicker, passionate and deceptive . . . This far and no farther . . . All her hunger and cold and avarice was for small fires, small

scalding cups . . . Which were for me only poison and irritation, leaving a taste of ohar and clay.

But if I think with humility that she loved me and set myself a rock higher for the thought, I am a fool. Because I could see farther than she saw, and find words to clarify sight, she wanted my eyes and words and mouth to be hers; and because of her terrible loneliness she needed someone between her and the nights. And to escape the loneliness born with life she walked into the more absolute isolation which was the fulfillment of her own will and the denial of all law. She was not mad. If she had been, I should accept this and not think of her any longer. But hers was the terrible, sane rationality of a stone. Existing and complete, worn by long continuous forces and the small chisel of hours in which what was done was ripped again and redone, until thought became only a movement of arms and a shifting of muscles for some definite but forgotten purpose. The sense of right and wrong gone utterly, drained by enormous selfishness. "Life has tormented, wrenched me. I shall probe back at it. Not as God—I have no interest in God—only in the clean spike of my own will."

And now her husband stares off sightless at nothing . . . "And Christ took clay and mixed it with his spittle and laid it on the blind man's eyes . . . and she took swamp mud, dried now and heavy, and held it in her hands, saying that belief was all Christ asked of a man, and it was not any power, but belief only; and spit on it and kneaded it up and down in her hands—you remember her hands, Cairn,—like dark bones and hard with too much work, but I could never do more to save her, the land taking all time. And I shouted at her, doubting and

angry with the pain, but let the clay dry there; and she said let it stay awhile there—you remember her voice, Cairn, and the sound like God in it? And I cursed myself for doubting, and let it stay."

This, Saul moving his swollen head back and forth where he hears sound, waiting patient as grass for his sight to come back . . . "Find her and bring her back, Cairn. Tell her her faith was strong, but my doubt too much. If she is afraid tell her that nobody knows about us. I've never told. She has nothing to be afraid of now. No one knows. You have never told."

HIS voice drones on and then there is her voice remembered, burst suddenly from its rind of caution. "He sees us. Looks at us every hour you are here. We are never alone." And then meaningless words, scrabbling for safety, covering what was said—not ever to be covered. "He thinks his sight failing, his eyes less sure. He sees as much as ever. There is nothing wrong."

And now Saul's voice, repeating, droning on over his confessional, great hands lying empty on his knees. "She read me the miracle of healing. Said, 'Your faith is great enough to do it. If Christ lives', she said, 'you will be healed. If a man born blind is healed, why not you? Still seeing and your eyes only dim'—She had faith—she had more than I . . . If a man say he is without sin . . ."

And then her voice remembered, in the dark and in the lamp fog . . . "He spies on us. There is nothing he does not see. You know this. You know it as well as I . . . If I could be alone . . . Feel unwatched . . . Unanswerable . . ." And her eyes hard on my face, saying again what her mouth had said, and more.

## Epitaph — continued

Betraying her a second time.

. . . I live now, leaving untouched all that was hers, leaving her room locked and untouched (although, having seen her heart's nakedness, there is no reason to turn away from the rest), and live as though each day she might return and take up her life again, expecting to find its sheared and ragged cloth miraculously rethreaded and unstained. I wash his eyes and read to him at night . . . Wonder over those great low tides of passion in which mind and flesh are at truce, and even food eaten for the sake of life only. Keep his land and mine lashed into yielding . . . But there is always this arid and insistent thought of her—personified itself as a sort of stale presence, knowing how she disliked or shut herself out of what

might have been meaning and point enough for life, and not merely bald land and earth re-torn each spring. These are hers, the half new, half rotted barns, the black and ragged sheep, the naked plum trees . . . hers the dragged clean road, burned back and weedless . . . The dust blowing up cool and acrid from the south in her throat and hair and like the taste of a grave in her mouth . . .

There was a wind then, monotonous and sometimes fierce. Wind like a barren lover, impotent and straining at the earth. Trying its stolid patience, but without rain . . . This wind now, and the earth hardened until it rings, and I walk between our fields, the road dust rising and blowing northward for every step, and can neither forget her, nor remember her with hate.

## DO NOT HUNT HAPPINESS

RONNALDA LOCKE

Do not hunt happiness.  
It will but flee before you  
like a gray hare in the swamp  
leaving only its cold form under the spruce.  
Do not snare happiness.  
Once the trap has sprung.  
Once the copper wire  
has tightened around its throat  
it is gone.  
Warm it—  
Smooth its rumpled fur.  
Shake it—  
Call to it—  
Yet shall it lie cold and awkward  
in your lap.

Rather go quietly  
into some high pasture,  
and suddenly from a thicket  
happiness will be watching with bright eyes.



## Time's Magic Instrument

Exhaustlessly the unbidden heart  
whose phantom fortitude exceeds our song,  
tip-toes the minutes of eternity.

Ten times ten thousand times,  
along day's dreamy destiny it goes  
on rhythmic toes: one, two, one, two,  
as step by step life's golden coins are spent:  
one, two, one, two,  
time's magic instrument!

Thus journeys on this muscled miracle;  
asleep—awake  
it keeps our rendezvous with fate:  
one, two, one, two, it goes  
to meet O Christ! who knows?  
Until life's final scene has been rehearsed:  
one, two, one, two—

and then  
it flees from keeper Time, to find at last  
the dusty secrets of the universe.

In the Public Library

Day after dreamy day I see them here,  
forsakers of the hour's realities;  
frail followers of trails that never were  
and heroed highways closed by centuries;  
hungerers that invade the bright corners of the mind  
and gather like misers its golden charities;  
papered and penciled parasites,  
picking like old buzzards  
the bones of men long dead.

And I say  
it is nobler to scratch one childish signature  
upon the corroded crust of Time  
than pass unchallenged through heaven's gate  
upon another's shoulders.

## Four Poems — continued

### We Shall Remember

We whose dreams are turned to gaudy dust  
by time's fascistic chemistry  
to rouge depression's pallid brow,  
shall not forget with wine and beer  
our awful struggle here,  
or the long lean road we came.  
O, we are dumb—but still  
we shall remember your hard humanity!

We shall remember on some far-future day  
when many friends have found us,  
when we have thinned the world's thick tyranny,  
how Lazarus-like we came  
to you in mercy's name  
and how like Lazarus we were turned away:  
we shall remember the stony loaves you threw.  
O, we forget—but still  
we shan't forget such hospitality!

And when at last our bitter wounds have healed  
and nothing but the mind's old scars remain,  
we shall recall in pink prosperities  
your panics and your promises....  
and your black duplicities:  
we shall not lose the rocky road we came.

O, we are brothers still,  
some things we shall forget—  
but these  
we shall remember!

### Farther Than Death Away

And when the last pain drove its lightning wedge  
and split the thought-strewn chaos of the brain  
and earth's cyclonic dome that smothered me  
burst at last like a great bubble—  
then long long long down death's catastrophe  
I followed fate  
through spacelessness—past unrealities.

And down the dateless detour of the dead  
I fled dimension's shattered tangibles;  
past empty aught as unphenomenal  
as shadows of the eerie winds that creep  
along the haunted corridors  
where demon bats  
beat their weird wings against oblivion.

Past naught that was, and naught that might have been—  
past naught to be—past  
annihilation's zeroic nothingness;  
past these,  
past vague and vacuous vacancies.

And on and illy on—until  
beyond the ending's awful end—  
far-desolate—death-devitalized—  
hushed as rolling dewdrops in a dream,  
Lo! the abandoned Loom of Time  
towered Titanesque  
as Saturn's amber obelisk:

and there  
beyond the spectral silences  
the tangled skeins of misty days  
lay strewn like broken miracles  
across eternity.

And there  
Time's tarnished trophies hung more myriad  
than Caesar's enemies.

I cried  
GA MEE LE O ! GA MEE LE O !  
and then  
with unseen hands and unbelieving eyes  
I searched the ruins for realities.

## TRANSPLANTED

DOROTHY MARIE DAVIS

Too long her aching eyes had prowled the gaunt  
Dead desert hills, and now this spire of green—  
Slim, silver-limbed—a sapling birch. A screen  
Of memory . . . lush ferns, bright reeds that haunt  
Still, shadowed pools, pine glades where she was wont  
To linger once . . . the birch tree raised between  
Her desert-weary heart and earth grown lean  
And cruel, fighting death's stone-fisted taunt.

But that was spring. The summer scorched and dried  
The birch's leaves, No tending could restore  
Its green. The sandstorm beat it flat. It died.  
The woman's husband found her on the floor  
Lost-eyed. He held her in his arms and cried.  
They left and did not even lock the door.

## ECLIPSE

FRANK ANKENBRAND, JR.

The moon  
watched the sun  
from behind  
the hills;  
and when  
a tear formed  
in her eye,  
the moon  
reached up with  
her pale, grey hand  
and brushed  
it quickly away.

## STUDIO PARTY

JOSEPH UPPER

While auto lights glimmer on wet pavements,  
And the rain spatters against the sheltering windows,  
And the windows rattle in the wind,  
I can fashion to the music of the rattling windows and the spattering rain  
A tender song for you,  
And a sinful song for me,  
And a futile song for both of us.

I do not love you, I will not love you.  
Love is a curse and I have seen too much of it.  
I do not love you, I will not love you.  
Love is a folly and I have been a fool too long.  
I do not love you, I will not love you.  
This is the burden of my spattering song.

I do not love you, I will not love you.  
Yet I would be with you as a lover is with his loved one,  
Naked and hidden and close in a delicious intimacy of the flesh,—  
You and I and the spattering raindrops in the darkness,  
With the wind singing.

My restrained fingers ache to commence their long exploration.  
I want to cross the threshold of a house where I do not belong.  
I do not love you, I will not love you.  
Hear the rain singing its gypsy song.

Come with me now through the night and the rain and the wind.  
Come with me to my own small nest, let us leave this garrulous throng.  
I do not love you, I will not love you.  
But be to me for a while as one beloved.  
Hide with me in the darkness, lie with me close while the windows rattle.  
Come away with me now. Leave this studio prattle.  
Come with me now while the wind is strong.  
I do not love you, I will not love you.  
Come, let us end this maddening song!



## Burial of Workmen

Now the five crushed bodies  
are returned to the ground and the darkness,  
their last frail homes  
groaning beneath their brown burden,  
while a blossoming tree,  
caressed by the wind,  
blows over the barren mound,  
while a grapevine creeps on a wall nearby  
and stores in her womb the earth's full flow.

Now the summer's luscious fruit has fallen,  
the bountiful burden too vast for the life-giving bough,  
the fallen wealth wasted behind forbidden bars;  
while hunger, like a broken-winged crow  
caught in the brush, cannot move,  
can only mutter a dark, feeble cry  
that is lost in the inarticulate wilderness.

Now the five crushed bodies  
are returned to the ground and the darkness:  
only these are one with the bountiful fragrance  
of summer.

## Song of the Savage South

Let's hang the nigger on a limb.  
(Perhaps *he* didn't rape.)  
But first the tender parts of him  
must burn. And for his crepe

cut slowly long, thin bits of skin;  
and put oil on the fire!  
Hurrah! Hurrah! A black is in  
the heart of Southland's pyre!

Let's go beneath the nearest tree.  
(The night is warm and mellow.)  
And there a black nude lass will be  
the mother of a yellow,

*(unwanted) child. O men of south,  
go home to guarded wives;  
and soon a sister with her mouth  
will take her brothers' lives.*

## Three Poems — continued

### Nest

Are gods the thoughts that men have kept  
to prove the reason for their being  
here where hearts have laughed and wept,  
here where life is ever fleeing?

Must every note the mouth has sung,  
and every word the sage has spoken  
drop into the earth among  
dust and bough, forever broken?

Courageous thought, prophetic word,  
can blood so rich be poured in vain?  
Gods of wisdom, let each bird  
find a warm nest after rain!

## THE BLACK BOUGH

RUTH HILL MITCHELL

What is death  
But a breath  
Overlong?

Soul and flesh,  
Tangled thong,  
Closing mesh:  
Death is strong.

Old with grief  
New in leaf:  
Haunting man  
Myrobalan.

Over head  
Turns the dread  
Greying sun  
Lonely spun;  
Shadowed stone  
Carved below  
Is alone  
Intaglio.

Death has stalked  
Dragging spade;  
Love has walked  
Unafraid;  
Arms outflung  
Over earth  
Softly sung  
Beauty's worth  
Loveliness  
All to bless.

Where the vain  
Leafy pain  
Leaves a scent . . .  
Dying rose,  
Sharon blows  
Sacrament.

Soul and flesh,  
Tangled thong,  
Whole to thresh  
Sifting wrong:  
Seed prolong.

What is life  
But a wife  
Big with child  
Undeified?

But to Eve  
Only leave  
Core and peel:  
Scarlet seal  
Cochineal.

*Every bough*  
Heavy now:  
Bitter fruit,  
Sickling root,  
All belong.

What is death  
But a breath  
Overlong?

# WHAT IS YOUR TRUTH?

By Hugh Allan Wing

*Mr. Wing, a member of the English Faculty of the University of Pittsburgh, was born in Utah. After working as a steam-shovel man for some years, he switched to teaching. During the war he was in the air service. Since taking an A. B. and M. A. at the University of Utah, he has studied at Wisconsin, Harvard, and Pittsburgh. Two years of teaching in preparatory schools left him profoundly skeptical of the value of secondary school English; at present he hopes to see college education become more honest and more courageous. Mr. Wing's chief interest is aesthetic and critical theory.*

"Critics are allies of the Devil," quoth one exasperated poet. Perhaps they are, but we cannot escape them, for all of us are critics. Every choice involves an act of criticism, whether we elaborate our reasons or not. Whenever, for instance, we read or reject a book, we are criticising it. Now in judging literature we base our opinions on certain assumptions, which, because we do not live isolated, we share with many others. Hence it is imperative to examine the leading theories about literature, since whether we believe them or not, we are influenced by them in many ways.

Some of these theories are unimportant. The vulgar notion that literature exists merely to amuse or entertain, "as a substitute for the after-dinner cigar", is held by no thoughtful person, and so may be dismissed forthwith. Also easily dismissed are the esoteric theories like expressionism, da-daism, and so on, for they are known only to small groups. But there are two other theories which, though even more dangerous, are far more respectable, in fact they seem to be the dominant critical theories today; therefore I wish to examine them at length.

The first has been called the Academic Theory, partly because it is, unhappily, so prevalent among teachers of literature, especially in colleges and universities, and partly because the term suggests certain of its milk and water aspects. This theory seems plausible, and only by analysis do we discover its imperfections. It stresses the value of "pure literature" (an abstraction), and puts a high value on decorum, refinement, and the less intense kinds of beauty. In general, conservatives are partial to this theory.

The second theory, on the other hand, is now preached mainly by extremists among the Left Wing critics, though it has a long and honorable lineage in the schools. The main tenet of this system is that the purpose of literature is to make people better; but naturally, since no one has ever given a universal and binding definition for "better", it may mean anything. To the conservative, it means, to make the reader conservative; to the revolutionary, it means, to make the reader revolutionary. This may therefore be called the Partisan, or better, the Didactic Theory.

Both these theories are inimical

## What Is Your Truth?—continued

to literature. Their evil effects can easily be seen in the past history of our literature, and as clearly in contemporary writing. They influence directly or indirectly everyone who reads, and all but the boldest writers—even if to wild reaction. They also affect the teaching of literature in the schools. Too many of our grade and high schools deliberately try to shut out the controversies of the outside world; and economic, political, social, and religious tabus make most of the subjects students ought to study unmentionable. Consequently, no book which deals realistically with love, with social problems, with the defects of our civilization, or which tells the truth about our history, can be used in school. As a result, most of the books studied in schools are ill-suited to the students' needs. Worse still, many of them have little real literary value. The poorest poems of Longfellow are read; the good ones are ignored. The novels are for the most part dull and safe, seventy-five or a hundred years old, at least. There is hardly a work on any high school reading list known to me which has much pertinency to the problems which the youth of the present time are facing.

The Didactics likewise in their way degrade the teaching of literature in the schools. It is the influence of this theory, exerted through business men schoolboards and political-minded superintendents, and combined with the uncritical ideas of grade school teachers, which leads to such absurdities as memorizing passages of poetry and prose notable only for gaudy rhetoric, like "Excelsior", or for windy platitudes, like the wretched "Psalm of Life"; or which justifies the choice of "Ivanhoe" by the fact that it has long antiquarian essays which no child, apparently, ever reads, or, in

another vein, the full success-story of Benjamin Franklin. The Academic Theory tends to keep any controversial issues out of school or literature; the Didactics strive only to allow that which has some kind of conservative moral halo; and between them they stifle any possibility of stimulating experiences in literature for the children in most schools. Is it any wonder that with literature sabotaged at the start by these two theories, children grow up despising poetry, and convinced that all description must be in its very nature dull? Every writer, especially, ought to combat these theories wherever he finds them, for they not only distract him in his own work, but they steal from him much of his potential audience. When it is considered that only about five million people in this country read any books at all, and then mostly best sellers, it is evident that something is disordered in our school system.

These two theories of literature are just as injurious to contemporary literature. The Academic Critic in the Universities ordinarily is too often much more interested in an obscure writer of three hundred years ago than he is in the most vital writer of his own day. Why? Because the contemporary writer is dealing with issues that are alive and demand answers. A Dreiser, a Joyce, a Thomas Wolfe, or a Jeffers forces the reader to reevaluate his social judgments; and the Academic Soul does not want to make social judgments—his opinions were made for him a hundred years ago, and he means to keep them. I have heard college professors of literature *boast* that they were totally ignorant of what was going on in the contemporary world of economics, science, politics, and even literature! I have heard others



urge that Keats is a great poet because, of all things, there are no revolutionary ideas in his poetry! The irony of it is, such people do not see that had they lived in the time of Keats and Wordsworth, they would have despised them as revolutionaries, as did the Tory critics; and Chaucer they would have been afraid of, also, because of his dangerous frankness. The Academic Critics wherever found grew faint at the mention of Faulkner or Caldwell; they cry, "Life is not like that!" meaning their life is not. They will not grant that in the South, life may be like that, and they will not grant that disgust with a rotten civilization is a laudable motive for writing. They forget, conveniently, that parts of Dante's *Inferno* are nauseating; Dante wrote a long time ago, so that is all right. On the other hand, they overpraise writers like Edith Wharton and Thornton Wilder because of their gentility and stylistic ability. And they give countenance to the absurd idea that Booth Tarkington's dreadfully snobbish and timid stories about children are as good as *Huckleberry Finn*.

The Academic Critic would if he could emasculate literature. In reality he is afraid of modern life. He is afraid of change; he wants to cling to his comfortable position. Consequently, the shameful inequalities and wretchedness of the present world, with its millions in squalor and want, and its corruptness of spirit, dismays and oppresses him. He wants writers to ignore all this ugliness, or else idealize it, or else make it picturesque and quaint, as three novelists have recently done, or else pretend that the poor and wretched are not really unhappy, but, being used to sordid living conditions, like poverty and enjoy it.

This is called spreading sweetness and light.

The Didactics are almost as bad for literature. They want everything to teach an abstract lesson of some kind. They are not content to see and understand; they demand that the author be a sort of jack of all trades. Besides being an artist, he must also be sociologist, politician, and reformer. The artist may look down a dirty alley and write about it, but he must somehow show how to abolish alleys. Especially is this true of certain of the extremist Marxian critics. They demand that the author make his poor proletarians not only hungry and dirty, but he must leave them still with something of angelic light; they must be heroic, and it will be better if at the end they join the Cause. The new happy ending! This theory to be sure gives more scope in material to the writer, but is likewise an obstacle to honesty, and carried very far leads to the same futility as the other one.

For instance, some of the most extreme Left critics dismiss Shakespeare, saying he was reactionary, while dull, false, melodramatic rigmarole is hailed as "proletarian literature", and extolled as the literature of the future, merely because it is full of revolutionary propaganda; and yet, no worker could endure to read it through, so sentimental and crude is it. Even John Strachey, the outstanding Communist writer, rebukes Granville Hicks for not paying enough attention to writers as writers. Moreover, the falsity of this method of judging literature is exposed devastatingly by the fact that while the Radical Didactics were gnashing their teeth over the "nostalgia and bourgeois decadence" of *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, the Didactics of the Right

## What Is Your Truth?—continued

were shouting it was a great masterpiece, giving as a reason that it taught a profound moral and religious lesson! Both based their judgment on the same dogma, and neither paid much attention to the artistic values of the book. Thus their criticisms cancel out to exactly zero.

The fact is that neither school has ever thought very deeply about what literature tries to do. There is more to literature than beauty, more than style and form and technique; on the other hand, there is more also than the mere utility as propaganda. Art is not peacock feathers under glass; neither is it dynamite. But what, then, the adherents of these two heresies might ask, is literature? What is a good artist? There is no single answer. An artist may create pure beauty, as in Keats' *Ode to Autumn*; or he may move us to changes in our institutions as does Shelley. But no real artist limits himself to either of these narrow aims. There is more than pure sensuous beauty in Keats; and more than mere revolutionary propaganda in Shelley.

A writer of course writes when he has an intense experience, plus a motive for passing on the meaning of that experience. It may be almost any kind of experience; but in any case the motive for passing it on is the important thing. A striking and pertinent example of the creative artist at work is the story I heard of a painter riding into Pittsburgh one winter night on a train. Looking out of the window, suddenly he saw a brilliant explosion of red and yellow from a steel furnace flare over the snow and the heavens. Seizing his painting accoutrements, he leaped off the moving train in the dark, bruising himself, and then, standing in the snow, he caught the scene on his

canvas. Now the important fact here is that he felt *compelled*, at risk of life and limb, to paint that particular scene. Why? It had a meaning in reference to his system of values, and painting it would objectify something he felt about the world and wished to share with others.

We can imagine other artists painting the same scene for different reasons. To some, such a scene would be stirring and beautiful; to others, ghastly. A painting from the one might be as valuable as from the other. So with writing. One writer seeing the dirty alley might be struck by the terrible squalor of it, and express his sense of disgrace at living in a society where there are such alleys. Another might be struck by the patience and pathetic decency of the inhabitants. Still another might, like Swift, fall into a rage at this very patience that permits human beings to go on meekly living under such oppression and inhuman conditions. Who shall say whether one's attitude is better than that of the others? He would produce the best literature, who, having the most intense feelings about the experience, had also thought long and deeply, as Wordsworth puts it, and then found the best form and the most effective symbols to convey what he felt and thought about it. He would find the form appropriate to his material; this implies that he had mastered the significance, the meaning of it. And that would be utterly different for every honest man.

All we can ask of the artist is his truth. The truth is not easy to see, nor easy to get at; it requires great honesty, continued patience, and intense concentration to master raw experience and turn it into literature. Each man has certain biases, certain peculiar ways of seeing

things and reacting to them; these are the very capital of his art, precisely for these what he has to say is valuable to the world. We learn about the world piecemeal, a little here, a little there; and each facet of our knowledge is shaped by the different point of view and temperament of some other person. Thus, in a counterrevolutionary period Chaucer adjusts happily and comfortably to his world, and gives us the gay and tranquil *Canterbury Tales*, while at the same time the author of *Piers Plowman*, raging at the corruptness and oppression of that society, flames out with a revolutionary broadside, for that is what *Piers Plowman* is. Which is better? Both are true. But strangely, Chaucer's is the more revolutionary—it still is revolutionary in many different ways. Why is this? Simply because Chaucer saw the truth about his time more truly, and expressed it more completely and more honestly. The point is that a man must write his own way. If he is a revolutionary, let him describe the world as he sees it; if he is conservative, let him do likewise. If the revolutionary wants to propagandize, let him write pamphlets; if the conservative wants to go on writing, let him write as he feels, for he deserves to be laughed at if he tries to write proletarian novels, for he will fail both as novelist and as propagandist.

Why does society not willingly let die some works? Because it continues to learn from them. Poetry, says John Dewey, "criticizes life not directly, but by disclosure, through imaginative vision addressed to imaginative experience (not set judgment) of possibilities that contrast with actual conditions . . . It is by a sense of possibilities opening

before us that we become aware of constrictions that hem us in and of burdens that oppress . . . The first stirrings of dissatisfaction and the first intimations of a better future are always found in works of art."

That is why we need all kinds of artists, conservative, religious, skeptical, communist. If the world tomorrow turned back to 1929 and its touching faith in capitalism, it would be stupid to imprison the Marxist writers, for such a society would desperately need their wisdom. Conversely, if tomorrow we woke to find a revolutionary society functioning, I should hope that a few conservative artists were left to roam the deserts. Perfection would not come over night, and a socialist society, no matter how utopian, would always need new values, which are supplied by artists par excellence.

In any case, all sincere writers are in effect revolutionary, whatever their politics. No writer is likely to take the immense pains to write unless what he has to say is radically different from what is already known and accepted. Artists humanize us, sharpen our sympathy, make us look behind labels; they show us the concrete concealed in the abstract; they bring us back from *numbers* to *people*. Wordsworth, an avowed revolutionary, wrote little revolutionary propaganda; but he bettered civilization tremendously by forcing people to see that children and the poor are human beings. After Wordsworth it was never again possible to remain in smug complacency while the "lower orders" suffered. Reality is a goad, if we dare look at it; and artists force us to. "This then is *my* truth," said Nietzsche. "What is yours?"

## FIVE SERIES

LE GARDE S. DOUGHTY

### Cynic Series

#### Vigil:

Love is an ivory Matterhorn  
Whose strength of ivory tissue  
Is compound with an ivory scorn  
Of its eventual issue.

Love is unshatterable—yes.  
But we must watch with care

Lest, powder-like, love shatter into air.

#### Misgiving:

Stay in the heaven of my sight,  
My constant star, be wary;  
Nor wander off into the night,  
Nor rise, nor set, nor vary.

But if you go, thus go my eyes;  
And if you venture far,

Seeing all the stars, how shall I see the star?

#### Scruple:

But constant star and ivory peak.—  
Are these beyond all groping?  
And is it wise at all to seek,  
Or count them in our hoping?

But ivory peak? . . . and constant star? . . .  
Nor let me go away,

Nor let me ever wish to go away.

### Psychology Series

#### Of Anger:

And if my temple veins turn red  
And corrugate with anger,  
You must not wish them smooth instead  
And lush with stoic languor.

But let me hate the hateful thing,  
And love in like degree

The lovable. My love, wish that of me.



**Of Fear:**

And if I cringe to shadowy fears  
And you would deem me coward,  
Think through the dark ancestral years  
Milleniums have dowered;

Think what is written in the ground  
Through many a lithic page

From spore to my unconscious heritage.

**Of Melancholy:**

And if I flounder, scourged of wit,  
Through some intangible sadness,  
Is such phenomenon a fit  
Of melancholy madness?—

But madness is insane, my dear;  
And it is sane to see

The common crucible. Think that of me.

**Syllogistic Series**

**Major Premise:**

Or turn the premise from the cup  
Of blood-warm hedonism,  
Or, fingering ice-cubes, pick it up  
A gelid syllogism;

The premise rises singular,  
Though contradictions prove:

The purpose of all consciousness is love.

**Minor Premise:**

Or passion pose the minor part  
That system orders second,  
Or reason supersede the heart  
And urge the point be reckoned;

The minor premise is: We love.  
What difference if we gain

Our premise from the pulse or from the brain?

## Five Series — continued

### Conclusion:

Why do we bring a proof, my dear,  
A proof that needs no bringing?  
A lovely axiom standing clear  
Is more a cause for singing.

And flesh and flesh and mind and mind  
We harbor and possess;

And sate the purpose of our consciousness.

## Philosophy Series

### Mind and Matter:

Nor shall they pique us with the tracts  
They write on Mind and Matter.  
Let scholars set up doubtful facts,  
And other scholars shatter.

And Mind and Matter, what are they  
But parts of us? and we! . . .

Come wedge my fingers, dear, and think of me.

### Being:

They tell us Being is a crux.  
We answer that we know it;  
Nor need a gross of cloudy books  
About it all to show it.

So let them probe and speculate  
And bother overmuch.

To me the whole of Being is in your touch.

### Schools:

Philosophers have what besides  
A wink for all their troubles?—  
Philosophies come up like tides  
Then go away like bubbles.

But what have you and I to do  
With such bewildering stuff?

Our silence is philosophy enough.

by LeGarde S. Doughty

## Tangible Series

### To Have:

Your firm and ripening orange breast  
Eurythmically divided,  
Resilient on my muscled chest  
Where God-compulsion guided:

We lie with nought between us, love,  
But fever, love; we lie

Fulfilling our fulfillment, then we die.

### To Hold:

The liquid on your rosy mouth  
Is succulence of summer.  
Your flesh is languorous as the South,  
A yielding, fecund mummer.

But solstice comes and sequent fruit  
And anguished harvesting;

Then winter comes and then not anything.

### To Be One:

Around us each was conscious verge;  
Then we began to mingle—  
One-like to clutch, to cling, to merge  
And now the *we* is single.

But even rock disintegrates.  
Oh, tremble still as one,

Before the film of winter blots the sun.

## THE LOAFER

JENNIE RICHEY

Who knew him best stepped to one side a bit  
On meeting him, along the old board walk  
Near Crocker's grocery, where he used to sit  
And brand an erring woman with his talk.  
He was a godly man on Sabbath Day,  
Head bowed on pudgy hands, with fingers spread  
To watch his unsuspecting neighbor pray,  
To know he closed his eyes and bent his head.  
His gentle wife grew braver for his sake;  
We scarcely saw the tremble of her lip  
The day he drowned her kittens in the lake  
And stuck his pitch-fork in the heifer's hip.  
I saw her near his grave at even-tide;  
I saw her walk a little to one side.

# WIND IN THE GRASS

BENJAMIN MUSSER

A small wind seemed to skip across the field  
And touch, but undisturbingly, the frond  
Of grass, of clover. Undisturbing, too,  
Its fingertips caressed the face of him  
Who, motionless, knelt amid the unmoving green.  
He was not praying now. The white hot cry  
Had coursed, like molten lava, and his tears  
Like torrid streams had gone their way, to leave  
But glistening after-stains. His lips were dumb,  
Not speaking now that cry of helplessness,  
That longing. He was listening within;  
His closed eyes were encompassing the all  
Of the whole bubble-world; his heart could feel  
Pressure of all of life, and all of death;  
And for a little space his mind beheld  
The end, and the beginning, and between,  
Each in its due relationship to each,  
And all with the Omega binding them.  
So he knelt, listening in the listening air,  
While the small wind stood still with folded hands,  
And a great calm was in that silent place,  
And a young peace was there. And God was there.

It was but newly so. This young small wind,  
So gay, so tender, wind from unearthly height,  
Was child of a tempest in his troubled heart;  
And even now, though listening within,  
Timidity in breathing of the soul  
Made him seem not quite born, this man-a-child.  
Yet was this but the end of what had been  
And would not be. For what he was, was gone,  
Gone on the tempest forever. He needed time  
Only to know this stranger who was he  
And, with him, to know God, and know no man  
Save in impersonal love, and intercession.

How easily were certain happy souls  
Turned, as were flowers to sunshine, to the sum  
Of sun and planets, to the sum of love,  
To the whole meaning of the eternal plan!  
How easily as breathing did they love  
The Lover of all lovers, and for sake  
Of Him secrete their hearts within His Heart!  
What was for them the sunlit pathway, trodden  
Like the small wind that skipped across the field  
And never bruised, but blessed, all things in passing;  
What was for them a life caressed as lightly  
As the *pax* kiss of Holy Eucharist,  
Life touched but never marred, and then relinquished  
Joyously for the real life to come;



What was for them a ready understanding  
Of the dark mystery of pain, of sin,  
Of the pursuit of worldlings, of the terror  
Of wars on God and on the sons of God;  
Why press of life dealt heavily on some  
And others, seeming undeserving, went  
Laden with wealth and honors their brief day:—  
These had been troubled storms for him, the path  
Broken and filled with stabbing darts of shade,  
And that serenity they knew, for him  
Had to be fought for.

So his tempest blew,  
Tearing the grass and clover, and his clouds  
All but walled out the Lover, shining still  
But in the murk that was his troubled soul.  
With indirection, in his zeal to break  
Out of himself and, living, be a saint,  
Having espoused the Faith, he wed as well  
Every excess of a pious mode,  
Wore chains and hairshirts, went on pilgrimage,  
Donned livery of a mendicant, knelt hours  
On a stone pavement under arching stone,  
Slept on the floor, went fasting half the day.  
Marvelous were his moments, not denied,  
Yet were they fruitless, for he had not slain  
The he that was, in living in this other.  
And so the years, and so the storm, sped on.  
And still the tempest blew, and still the cloud  
Obscured his vision where the Great Light burned.

Then he would win to Heaven, not on bruised knee,  
But by embrace of life, embrace of the world,  
By living as man with men, by holding fast  
To life abundant, by leading, not being led,  
By being his captain, facing the wind in its wrath,  
By shaking his fist in its teeth, by laughter and song  
And flinging the challenge to hell, by riding full tilt  
Straight through the tunnelled terrors of sin with a cry  
Exultant! A plan some could have borne to the edge  
Of the moment of death, and not failed. But not such as he.  
He was of lesser mould, not lesser loved  
Because of this, but lesser held to be  
Bravado-hero with a flaming sword.  
Victory over himself was not to be  
In a flamboyant manner, crushing down  
His lusts and his ambitions as a man  
Vindictively might crush a snake. He learned  
Slowly, through years, until that evil storm  
Had spent its fury, when, in the smaller wind  
A smaller way was opening to him,  
Yet larger in its ultimate sacrifice.

## Wind in the Grass—continued

Not zeal of unchecked plan to ecstasies  
Presumptuous in the planning and excess;  
Not by rough riding through the caves of hell  
And tunnelling through mazes of the world  
With sin-defying gusto. He had come,  
Pain-laden and with scars, to quieter ways  
Where little acts with deep-abiding love  
Filled out the shadows in a risen sun,  
Where trust not in himself, and not his will,  
And love that burned so steadily it burned  
Ever more deeply, were the winds that blew  
His heart to Heaven, and his soul pursuing.

True, he still dreamed, and with an aching dream,  
Of hermit anchorage by a friary church  
With lancet window to the altar slit,  
Where he might round his days and years to be  
Alone with The Alone; where neither frost  
Nor summer heat could change his tempered heart,  
Cold to himself and burning for his Love;  
Where neither fast nor penances would be  
His ladders in themselves to Heaven-height,  
Nor dryness of the soul, nor ecstasy,  
A grief or consolation; where he could,  
Forgotten by the world but not forgetting,  
Be a small wind to blow the world to Him  
Through a life-praying of an anchorite.  
True, he still dreamed. And in that aching dream  
Found strength to take the cross, to meet each day  
Smiling with smile that knows Gethsemane.  
What the good God had still in store, to add  
To crosses given (which the world knows not  
And hardly would believe, to see him smile),  
He would await, untroubled, who had come  
Now in the small gay wind to find the quiet  
Avenue to His love, and his own peace.

Passion not spent but for a space subdued  
Until the spending could be turned, instead,  
Into the Passion of Christ, he did not look  
Ever again one day ahead, or plan  
Heroic or a burning lane to Heaven,  
But waited, asking nothing, giving all . . .  
A small wind seemed to skip across the field  
And touch, but undisturbingly, the frond  
Of grass, of clover. Undisturbing, too,  
Its fingertips caressed the face of him  
Who, motionless, knelt amid the unmoving green.  
So he knelt, listening in the listening air,  
While the small wind stood still with folded hands,  
And a great calm was in that silent place,  
And a young peace was there. And God was there.

## TWO SONNETS

JOSEPH LEONARD GRUCCI

### I

Once, when I held love lightly as a leaf  
And would have flung it down as by a wind  
In autumn, with but little or no grief  
For something left indifferently behind,  
I could have sworn the heart was of no matter  
While the brave mind weighed beauty for its worth  
With grave precision—mindless of the patter  
Men made of love, scoffed that they grieved its dearth.

It was a moment of unwisdom; yet  
Sometimes, alone, when I speak loud your name  
To the unlistening air (my tongue still wet  
With yours), I could despair of an old shame—  
Though love, sweet at the lips, is wormwood still,  
Destroying the heart with an insidious skill.

### II

My heart, once emptied of your loveliness,  
Would feed on beauty cold, remote as stars,  
And watch—without surprise and comfortless—  
The darkness broken by the passing cars,  
And think: A heart, unused to quietude,  
Is stilled from rapture it once proudly knew;  
Yet marvel that this heart could have subdued  
Astonishment, when most remembering you.

Somewhere your beauty lives, when you are gone,  
In other hearts than mine; but they, unknown  
To the bright splendor of our youth that shone  
A moment with desire, will think it blown  
From meteors or petals of a rose,  
Their beauty stirring but awhile, to close.

## VISION THE SCENE

GEORGIA B. GIERASCH

Not forever  
Will the heart flutter,  
The eyes be keen,  
Take what you may  
In the blowing:  
Vision a scene  
Of the summer ended,  
Dusk-laden eyes,  
And the grave's demesne.

Not, while earth flowers  
Or bees hive,  
Look askance on the rose  
Or dew-laden bowers  
At dawning  
That offer repose!

## TWO POEMS

REGIS A. KAUSLER

### Statues in the Park in Summer

Now how in the world  
do you expect one to see  
statues  
in the park?  
While strolling  
with *her*,  
holding hands,  
swinging arms  
in rhythm,  
while strolling  
with *her*  
in the park?

Walking alone  
in the park,  
one might see statues  
of marble and bronze—  
but who wants to walk alone  
in the park?  
Alone,  
with one's mind  
in the park—?  
not I—

### Wealth —

Wealth  
is a doorman  
trimmed in gold—

He'll bow Sir  
and open doors  
for you to-day  
Sir—  
(yes Sir, go right in Sir—)  
but not always  
though,  
to-morrow—  
he may shut them—  
SLAM them!  
in your face—

Wealth  
is a doorman  
trimmed in gold  
all right.



The years withdraw from her  
like slapped-back kisses,  
and her lips grown thin  
from so much pursing,  
relax into prim withdrawal.  
As in an allegorical metamorphosis,  
years become moths in her hope chest,  
and even her hands flutter moth-like  
across the face of life.

Seventy years now ;  
fifty-five from the flowering  
and twenty from the menopause.

She still can sigh,  
and does,  
at each romance's final kiss,  
and seeks another yet  
with fresher thrill.

She has walked down an aisle of seasons  
seen through a veil grown silkier,  
charmed by a shut-in Lohengrin.

Death, here comes your bride!

TO A HARLOT  
I. HOMER D'LETTUSO

Nothing but the loneliness of street mazdas  
And night that defies the threat of dawn ;  
like a lover opening Pagan arms  
freeing a love  
reluctantly—

Nothing can fill  
the void of you . . .  
(the free earth that wanders  
aimlessly about the city  
can spare little of its verdure  
for beauty—)

Nothing but the harshness of asphalt  
And cars that pulse a constant throb ;  
like Afros beating temple drums  
deifying a stone  
hopelessly—

no, nothing can fill  
the void of you . . .  
(the segment of cloud that creeps  
listlessly about the town  
can boast of no communion  
with the ground—)

# THE WILD SWAN

By August W. Derleth

*Mr. Derleth was born in Sauk City, Wisconsin twenty-six years ago, and educated at the State University. His first story was placed at the age of fifteen with Weird Tales, and since that time he has had published over three hundred stories in such magazines as the Atlantic Monthly, Scribner's, New Republic, and some eighty more. He is already the author of three successful mystery novels, and a serious novel, Place of Hawks, reviewed elsewhere in this issue. In prospect are three more mysteries, and three serious works, not to mention a collection of shorts, and one of poetry.*

**E**VEN with her eyes hidden behind the field glasses, he knew how grey-green they were, how deep and quiet. He knew that if he touched her skin, it would be soft and delicate like the faint flush in her cheeks. Looking at the full mouth struck across her oval face, he felt his body tingling, and resisted an impulse to reach out and brush the field glasses aside.

He looked uneasily away from her, toward the prairie stretched westward from the village across the river, and up into the sky, where his eyes instantly fixed upon a large bird flying out of the north. He thought at first it was one of the lake gulls that had come up the Wisconsin early that October, then, seeing it was larger than a gull, wondered if it might not be one of the eagles that had nested all summer on the bluffs south of Sac Prairie. Watching it intently, he saw that it did not fly like an eagle.

"What kind of bird is that, Elinor?" he asked.

She had already caught the bird in the focus of the glasses, and peered at it now a moment before replying. "I don't know," she said. "It's a big white bird."

"Let me see."

She surrendered the glasses and he took them eagerly. He focused them and caught the bird in the

first dip of its descent toward the network of sloughs just below the hill on which they were sitting. The smoky October sun shone dully on its wings, but almost at once he recognized the bird—a single wild swan—and at the same moment its call sounded in the still afternoon.

"Oh, it's a swan—a wild swan," he said, without lowering the glasses. "And it's coming down to the sloughs."

She did not immediately say anything, but presently commented casually, "I've read about them, but I never saw one."

He had an uncomfortable feeling that she should not have said that. Handing the glasses to her, he said, "Look at it. You can see it easily between the trees down there. It's on the water now."

As she looked at the bird, he said, "They're pretty rare now, but they used to come often. They never stay long, maybe a day, sometimes in good weather a week or ten days. This one looks like the rarest of them all—a whistling swan. A lovely bird."

She nodded barely perceptibly.

**H**E was about to continue when he saw that she was no longer looking at the swan. She had swung the glasses away and had fixed her sight on the train crawling along

the river bank on the Sac Prairie side. He checked words in his throat, and sought out the white spot of the swan through the almost leafless trees bordering the sloughs.

He thought of the beautiful swan as having struck a dissonance in the afternoon. Instantly he banished the thought, recognizing dissonance in himself, reluctant to admit dissonance in Elinor. For the swan was a part of the soft west wind that was so casually stripping the yellow leaves from the poplars, part of the smoke-ridden haze along the horizon, part of the Indian Summer day, the day so lovely that he knew he would look back upon it as never having been. And Elinor, whom he wanted to hold softly in his arms together with the day, sat following with her lustrous eyes the automatic precision of the train that chuffed daily in and out of Sac Prairie.

Presently he opened his notebook and began to sketch a plan for a house, drawing in a hedge with extreme care. He was conscious of her lowering the field glasses and placing them carefully in the dry grass. She sat watching him, and he found himself after a while unable to draw because of the way the wind caught at her hair. He tapped the notebook idly with his pencil, expecting her to inquire momentarily why he was not going on with it.

But she did not. Instead, she said abruptly in a soft, far-away voice, "The whistle of a train at night is a lonely sound."

He was so startled by the sound of her voice and the depth of her words that for a minute he was incapable of answering her. When he spoke, he challenged, "You're lonely, Elinor."

"No," she said.

"Yes, you are," he insisted. "You have been lonely a long while. Only lonely people notice such things."

"Then you were lonely, too," she said.

The sharp simplicity of her words held him in silence. He bent abruptly, caught her in his arms and kissed her hard on the mouth, not releasing her for what seemed a long time. Then it was her inertness that made his arms drop away.

Her eyes, strangely opaque and free of any emotion, looked into his, and she asked, "Why did you do that?"

"I wanted to," he said. "I've been wanting to for a long time."

To this she made no reply, continuing to fix him with her eyes until uneasiness struck him, and he looked away. "Annoyed?" he asked gently.

There was a brief hesitation before her, "Yes"; it was not reassuring.

He closed the notebook and slid it from his knees. Then he took up the glasses, fixing them immediately upon the swan. In the blue silence, the bird's *kru . . . kru . . .* reached them.

"Is that the swan?" she asked.

He nodded. "It's a whistling swan."

There was silence while he watched the bird forage about in the sloughs. The glasses brought it close, and his eyes traced every graceful line of its figure. Its plumage had taken on a saffron tinge from the reddening sun already dipping toward the western hills.

"You can see cars coming down the bluffs," said Elinor suddenly.

"Can you?" he said expressionlessly.

LOWERING the glasses for an instant, he saw her watchfully waiting for him to turn them northward and see for himself the cars curving down the bluffs toward the

## The Wild Swan — continued

prairie from Baraboo, over ten miles away. He looked toward the road, saw briefly a large orange truck swinging around a curve, and thrust the glasses at Elinor with no comment other than a half smile.

She took them, focused the bluffs, and watched for a few moments in silence. Then she turned the glasses on the power dam flung across the Wisconsin only a mile to the north. Following the direction of her gaze, he was conscious for the first time of the rhythmic pounding of a pile-driver being used in the construction of a weir below the power dam. There were lights burning palely in the ungainly red building, and he was aware suddenly of the dusk folding itself gently about the prairie. The sun was a ball of red fire touching the western hills along the purple sky, and already a saffron afterglow was fanning upward into emerald blue. The force of the wind was lessening, and along the slope of the hill a flock of chickadees fed noisily in the long seeded grasses.

Elinor lowered the glasses and looked at him, her eyes catching the fire of the sun. Her lips were slightly parted, and her pleasure in the sunset was clear in her face.

He caught her shoulders almost roughly in his hands, bent her head backward, and kissed her again. Once more her inertness fought away his hands, and he pulled abruptly away, meeting her opaque eyes again.

"Elinor," he said quickly, "I'm in love with you."

"Yes, you are," she said unbelievably, a smile on her lips.

"I am," he said. "Have you ever been in love?"

He expected her to say she had, and anticipated telling her she did not know what love was, but she said, "No," so quietly and surely that it disarmed him.

Presently he asked, "How old are you, Elinor?"

"Seventeen," she replied.

"And you've never even had a crush on anybody?"

"No," she said.

If he had expected an element of surprise in her voice he was disappointed. Her voice was a monotone, emotionless and expressionless. He remembered absurdly, a time when someone had cut through a knot on a package, and when he had tried to tie the cord together again, there were too many ends. He felt frail and brittle ends escaping his clumsy fingers.

"It's time to start for home," he said abruptly.

Without a word, she came to her feet, shrugging into her velvet jacket before he could reach out for it. He put the glasses into the case hung about his neck on a leather cord, and took up his notebook.

"Oh, the swan!" she exclaimed suddenly.

He turned.

The wild swan was curving out of the trees into the afterglow, its whistle cutting wanly into the twilight. Up, up it circled, steadily southward. For a brief moment it was cradled in the new moon low in the western sky; then it had passed beyond, on its lone flight down the river, and the soft, purple dusk darkened its going.

As he stood there watching it, he thought of someone's having written somewhere and often, "Youth will not come again," and he marked this memory against the passage of the wild swan to the south. He was roused from his revery by Elinor's voice coming back along the trail down the hillside.

"Are you coming, Steve?" adding, as he came into her sight, "I always seem to walk faster than you."

He smiled. The whistle of the wild swan still rang in his ears.



# TRUNCATIONS

Among Phelps's 100 best books of the year listed in the June *Scribner's*, we're glad to find Jesse Stuart's *Man with a Bull-Tongue Plow*. There is something to be said for anyone writing 703 sonnets, even poor ones, and Jesse Stuart's are not that. There is a vigorous and innocent artistry about his poems that demands notice. Don't fail to see his two poems in this issue . . . Professor Phelps also lists, along with Millay, Robinson, and Bacon, Leighton Brewer's *Riders of the Sky*, a wartime narrative of the air. We had great expectations of this young poet, when we praised a little volume of his years ago, one which the critics did not even notice . . . Edwin Arlington Robinson's last work, *King Jasper* (Macmillan), completed just before his death, is to have an introduction by Robert Frost . . . The new Edwin Markham prize contest is now open. Ten prizes amounting to \$84 will be given for the best poems, not exceeding 300 words, on "What Edwin Markham's Poems Mean to Me"—closes Feb. 10, 1936. Address Ida Benfey Judd, 410 Central Park West, New York, N. Y. . . . High on the list of biographies of poets this summer will be Edgar Lee Masters' *Vachel Lindsay* (Scribner's) . . . And Chard Powers Smith's *Annals of the Poets* (Scribner's), a series of literary anecdotes . . . Owing to its "doubtful gentility," Cowper often did not acknowledge authorship of "John Gilpin" . . . Lola Ridge is at work on a long epic poem. Her lyric in this issue will possibly be included . . . A translation by Professor Henry Wells of Langland's *Vision of Piers Plowman* (Sheed & Ward) is promised . . . J. Redwood Anderson, the English poet appearing in this issue, writes us that he is half American, one of his direct ances-

tors being Abraham Redwood, founder of the Newport Library, R. I., and another being William Ellery, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. He has authored *Transvaluations* and *The Human Dawn*; a third volume, *English Fantasies* (Oxford), should be out late September. He has appeared only once before in this country, the *Atlantic Monthly* . . . Add to forthcoming letter collections, often important for new light on the writer, those of Thomas Gray (Oxford), William Vaughan Moody (Houghton, Mifflin), and William and Dorothy Wordsworth (Oxford) . . . "I despair of rivaling Lord Byron, as well as I may, and there is no other with whom it is worth contending."—Shelley . . . Robert Burns's favourite time for composition was at the plow . . . John Pudney, another of the English poets appearing this issue, has recently made a meritorious American appearance with *Open the Sky* (Doubleday, Doran) . . . If you never read another poem, don't fail to see Stephen Vincent Benet's "Ode to Walt Whitman" in the May 4th issue of *The Saturday Review of Literature* . . . Byron's first volume of verses appeared at the age of 19 . . . Robin Lampson's novel in verse, *Laughter Out of the Ground*, was accepted by Scribner's by telegraph the day after it was submitted. Combining the two doubtful features of a first novel and a poetry volume, it nevertheless heads the publisher's fall list. Robin, by the way, was born in California, the scene of his novel, in 1900; his column, *The Poetic Viewpoint*, in the *Berkeley Courier* tops newspaper poetry columns . . . Richard Aldington is due for a new long poem, *Life Quest* (Doubleday, Doran). We hear, too, of an American edition of his *Dream in the Luxembourg*, which an English publisher put out some time ago—a beautiful piece of work . . .

## REVIEWS---Poetry and Prose

After a reading of many books of varying stages of quality, one comes to *The Tragedy of Man* (The Macmillan Co. 241 and xxx pp. \$2.50) with a feeling very near to reverence. One cannot but feel as did Keats on first looking into Chapman's Homer, "like some watcher of the skies When a new planet swims into his ken." It is the feeling reviewers must have had—or should have had—on first looking into Goethe, or Dante; for *The Tragedy of Man*, more than any book for years back, has in it the breath of the classics.

Structurally, the *Tragedy* is a dramatic poem, portraying in fifteen scenes the eternal struggle between good and evil, embracing the past, present, and future of Humanity. Its author, the Hungarian, Imre Madach, died in 1864, never achieving in his lifetime the recognition his work merited. Indeed it is still difficult for the English-speaking world to place him. In our country he is virtually unknown, while in his own country he has already attained the status of a classic. In the seventy years since this drama was written, it has been translated into many languages and performed in a dozen famous European theatres. The only English version heretofore was an inept but brave attempt in 1909, which proved incapable of overcoming the difficulties of the work. So it is a great debt that is now owing to Charles Henry Meltzer and Paul Vajda for a highly dramatic and poetic translation.

There is a strong pessimistic strain running through the work. Even in the scene of ultimate redemption, which stamps the work as a mystery-play rather than a tragedy, there remains the pessimistic tone. Madach's vision is all-embracing; even in a work seventy

years old, there is a vitality to his theme found only in those works created for all time. His poetry is noble and inspired, forceful and dignified.

At the opening of the drama, the Lord has just completed the Creation. Amid the praises of the Archangels, Lucifer remains silent until questioned. "And what is there to boast of in Creation?" he asks in reply. "'Tis but a poem, writ in Thine own honour, Which Thou hast fitted to a faulty setting." Lucifer, the "Spirit that eternally denies", goes on to assert his own importance in the scheme of things, and is banished from Heaven, granted by the Lord two trees in Eden. "Thy dole is grudging," says Lucifer, "in the Lordly way. But it will serve—a corner's all I need, Enough to afford a foothold for Negation, Whereon to raise what will destroy Thy world!"

Scene two is laid in Paradise and follows the Biblical story of the banishment from Eden. Adam demands from Lucifer the knowledge he has been promised and wishes to look into the future to see the road Humanity must travel. In a series of dream-scenes, Lucifer then shows him Mankind's progress through history. In these scenes, Adam appears always as the central figure, the symbol of Humanity trying to attain Happiness, always feeling it within reach and always losing it. Eve also appears in every scene as Woman, sometimes above, sometimes below Adam, but always linked in some way.

In his first vision, Adam sees himself a youthful Pharaoh in Egypt; Eve, the wife of a dying slave, appeals to him. Adam, as Pharaoh, grants his slaves freedom: "What value hath the glory One man may win by ruining the millions?" Adam is disappointed in

Humanity's first milestone and begs to look more into the future, hoping for a Commonwealth wherein all men work not for one man but for one another.

The next scene, in Athens, grants his wish. He is now Miltiades, returned victorious from the wars. But the people have become the tools of a handful of rebellious tyrants, and are turned against the returning conqueror. He is put to death, renouncing his aspirations, "Why should any soul Aspire and burn away to reach the heights? 'Tis wiser to strive only for one's self And fill one's little span of life with bliss, Until we stagger drunkenly to Hades!"

Destroyed by the people he had tried to help, he gives himself over to a dissolute life as Sergiolus, a Roman voluptuary, with Eve now as Julia, a prostitute. But in the midst of the revels, he comes to realize "that joy is but a fragile flow'r Foredoom'd to fade." Cries of Christian martyrs make him resolve, with Love, to fashion a new world.

But Christian martyrdom is proved vain in the next scene, with Adam now appearing as Tancred, leader of the Crusaders, who has returned to find the people squabbling over theological definitions, and heretics being burned at the stake. Eve is Isaura, condemned to a nunnery to fulfil her father's vow. Lucifer, in a splendid scene, compares Woman's state in Roman times with that in the Middle Ages.

*Either Man sees in Woman but the means*

*Of gratifying low desire, and then,  
With brutal hands, he robs her  
tender face*

*Of poetry, love's chief and crowning  
grace,*

*And, by his action, doth himself  
despoil;*

*Or, like a goddess, thrones her on  
an altar,*

*And bleeds for her, or struggles  
uselessly,*

*While her frustrated kisses all are  
wasted.*

*Why can he never treat her as a  
woman,*

*Who, as a woman, hath her sphere  
and place?*

Adam (Tancred) sums up the period: "I went to war to fight for holy things; And found them curs'd by false interpretations. To honour God, Man crucified Mankind."

He turns to Science, and in the next scene is Kepler, the famous astronomer. Here he is forced to practise astrology, casting horoscopes to make money for his pleasure-loving wife. In the French Revolution, he is Danton, feeling the futility of Reason, and himself going to the guillotine.

In the ensuing London scene, a remarkably discerning picture of our own time, the world has become a marketplace. The Capitalist state is depicted, with everything reckoned by its monetary value, even the mother selling her daughter. Adam dreams of a new world, and finds it realized in the next scene, a magnificent Phalanstery; but he is again betrayed by the future. Men are no longer individuals, but uniformed numbers. A rose is a curiosity for the Museum ("Here is the very last of all the roses That blossom'd in the world. A useless flow'r—With millions of its sisters it would steal The fertile acres from the waving corn."); poetry and art are obsolete. Love is outlawed, matings arranged by the State, and babies turned over to it. So in Communism too is failure, and Adam longs for loftier spheres.

He is next found, floating in Space with Lucifer, having renounced the Earth. Matter, he says, is nothing; Thought and Truth are infinite. But he is recalled by the Spirit of the Earth, and returns to



find four thousand years have passed and the Earth at its inglorious close. The sun is a red, rayless ball, rapidly growing cold, the ground covered with snow and ice, Mankind's struggle nearly over. Science has not managed to triumph over Fate.

Only a few Eskimos survive. The wife of one of them offers herself to Adam, and Adam, seeing Eve again, is horrified at the nearly bestial state to which she has fallen, and flees, begging Lucifer to return him to the present.

Adam awakes from his visions, determined to avert the course Humanity must follow by throwing himself from a precipice. But Eve stops him; she is to become a mother, and his suicide can profit Mankind nothing. He knows then that Life must be accepted as it is. Happiness cannot be certain, but Life is worth its struggles. The closing words are, "Fight! And, unflinching, trust!"

To attempt more than a mere narration of the drama is impossible. Resemblances to other works may be noted—there are suggestions of *Faust* here and there—but any such resemblances are superficial. Basically, both dramas deal with redemption, but other than this, there are few sequences that parallel. Dramatically *The Tragedy of Man* is the equal of *Faust*; poetically it falls only a little short. In consideration of a world literature that places Goethe at the top of the immortals, this may appear too high praise, but it is praise given only after two readings of the *Tragedy* and a renewed acquaintance with *Faust*. With Goethe, Dante, and Milton, one day must be placed Imre Madach.

In *Changing Winds* (G. P. Putnam's Sons. 103 pp. \$2.00), Dorothy Quick's second book collection, the poet shows herself in

moods gay and serious, with the greater success lying in the latter. Miss Quick shows herself very capable in the brief love lyric, sometimes with an almost Dickinson-like touch. It might have been better had a few bits like "Variables" been omitted, but all in all the collection rises well above the average, with the title poem representative of one of her better moods.

As Professor Harlan Hatcher informs us, it is "the privilege if not the duty of a (literary) generation to appraise itself before the atmosphere in which it worked has faded and cannot be fully recaptured." This task of appraisal he has done in *Creating the Modern American Novel* (Farrar & Rinehart. 307 pp. \$3.00), a birdseye view of the streams and counter streams making up the current of the novel during the past forty years.

Professor Hatcher is not so blindly patriotic that he carries American literature back to the epistles of Captain John Smith, nor even to Washington Irving. With a very few exceptions, *The Scarlet Letter*, *Moby Dick*, and one or two others, American literature began with the close of the last century, with Stephen Crane, Frank Norris, and the realists that followed in their wake, and culminating in Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*, "the greatest and most powerful novel yet written by any American."

After a discerning commentary on the "young generation", led by F. Scott Fitzgerald and Floyd Dell, Professor Hatcher works up to his second great figure, Sinclair Lewis; while a third section, with an emphasis on Freudian psychology, presents Sherwood Anderson. These three figures, Dreiser, Lewis, and Anderson, together with Ernest Hemingway, the spokesman for the war generation, obviously are the

four leading figures of the period. Though the book continues to advance, the figures begin to come too close, though the perspective continues to remain rather true.

There will naturally be differences of opinion in a work of this nature, where one's particular literary god may not be sufficiently stressed. In our own opinion, Professor Hatcher perhaps overestimates Dorothy Canfield and Upton Sinclair, and underestimates Vardis Fisher and Thomas Wolfe (who, with only two novels to his credit, still deserves a complete chapter), and even omits entirely Robert Reynolds and Lester Cohen. On the other hand, he includes exceptionally fine portraits of John Dos Passos and Conrad Aiken, an illuminating explanation of why the war generation wrote as it did, and an interesting and well-deserved chapter on the Negro in literature.

Professor Hatcher possesses a happy, and sometimes amusing, faculty for pertinent statement. To say of William Dean Howells that "the pace (of the early century) was too fast for his tentative realism" is saying a good deal. And to say of *The Song of the Lark* that "it achieved the astounding miracle of pleasing both Henry Mencken and Stuart Sherman" is saying still more. The Sherwood Anderson novels "as a whole give the reader a curious sensation that the form is always about to fall to pieces although it never does." And of the escapism of Hergesheimer, we see "he has found the texture of the lace on a lady's drawers more engaging than her fate in the machine age."

Harlan Hatcher has accomplished a prodigious work in acquainting himself with all the works of these past years. The magnitude and thoroughness of his achievement may be known by the simple fact that he stops with nothing short of Katharine Brush's *Don't Ever*

*Leave Me*, scarcely off the publisher's press.

After an apprenticeship of several successful mystery novels and many short stories in the quality and experimental magazines, August W. Derleth has produced his first serious book-length work, *Place of Hawks* (Loring & Mussey. 250 pp. \$2.50), a book readers of the author's short stories have long awaited. Here, too, Mr. Derleth chooses his material from his own Sak Prairie people and the Wisconsin countryside. They are a select group he has chosen, a group stalked by madness. But unlike most writers of similar themes, Mr. Derleth does not hold up a warped mirror to life, but delineates in all sincerity warped lives.

The publisher's blurb to the contrary, *Place of Hawks* is composed of four loosely-connected novelettes strung on the single strand of a country doctor's visits to four families, accompanied by his fourteen year old grandson, who serves as narrator. The advantages of this objective, youthful viewpoint are great, while at the same time offering contrast to the manner in which similar material is generally displayed by the introspective Julian Green and others. The only disadvantage is a story sometimes skeletal in its factual outline, though as often the terseness gives a balance of stark, dark beauty.

"Five Alone", which lacks only slightly the deep compassion of the title story, is representative of the group. It is the story of the Grells, five of them and three dead ("silent in the house and alone with the others"), and particularly the story of Linda, who tries to be unlike the others but ultimately fails. Nicholas Grell's wife is his first cousin, and from this taint in the blood has developed an exaggerated sense of family unity. None is to leave the



family circle, and Anna, an older daughter, has drowned herself because she is unable to go with her lover. Even the dead are kept with the family, empty chairs being kept for them at the table and conversations carried on with them. Only Linda, the one who dares to break away, is considered dead.

There is a fatality about the Grells, and about all of Mr. Derleth's characters, a falseness within, which leads them inevitably to their end. In the case of Linda, in whom alone there was hope, the child that might have saved her is stillborn. The tone of the book may be given in a sentence: after the mindless Josef is drowned in the millpond, Ilsa addresses her younger sister, who was drowned the year before, "Yes, Anna, but you were quite different when we found you—all blue, and not very pleasant." Such are the Grells. And such are Mr. Derleth's other families, the Farways, the Ortells, and the Pierneaus, who follow the Grells along the path of disintegration.

These are strange, dark tales of August Derleth's, but well worth the reading, showing a fine maturity in a writer who is still one of the youngest of contemporaries. A series of wood-engravings and a macabre jacket design are capably executed by George Barford, a twenty-one year old Milwaukee artist.

In *Selected Short Stories of Today* (Farrar & Rinehart. 530 pp. \$2.50) Dorothy Scarborough, of Columbia University's English Department, has gathered together over forty stories of recent years, which she likes, "each one for some special quality." In making her selections, Miss Scarborough has shown herself a catholic critic, illustrating various forms of the present short story, obtaining her examples

from the quality magazines, the big-circulation, and the "littles". She has neglected only the pulps.

For those who enjoy statistics, *Harper's Magazine* comes off first with five reprints in Miss Scarborough's compilation; *Collier's* and *Saturday Evening Post* tie with three reprints each; *Atlantic Monthly* appears with two, and the other magazines only once. The volume, apart from its interest as a goodly portion of summer reading, serves as an accurate weathervane for the young writer as to the direction editors' minds are turning.

The collection opens with Milburn's "A Student in Economics", and passes from the sophistication of Saki (which should, by the way, turn many a new reader to Saki's work) to a story of Faulkner's, unfortunately in this case not the best example of his work. We have the delightfully humorous bit of Lupton A. Wilkinson and the much-anthologized "Telephone Call" of Dorothy Parker. Mary Ellen Chase's startling "Salesmanship" (in which a super-salesman sells a suit that will not shine to a mother who is buying it to use as a burial garment for her son) is here, and the stark brutality of Caldwell's "Rachel".

Miss Scarborough writes an interesting introduction concerning the outlook for the short story in America, and adds a few words for the inexperienced. "Many a lad jests at plot who never learned to construct one. It is easier to jot down incoherencies, to cut off strips of one's ego and submit them as short stories than it is to subject oneself and one's work to the discipline of form. The short story does not require a machine-made plot, but a sense of form it does need. If it have no direction, how can it arrive?" A valuable bibliography on the short story and fiction writing is appended, and brief biographical sketches of the authors precede the stories reprinted